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Stone Implements

324 412 Owing to the scarcity of hard stone, adzes were generally made of *Tridacna* shell; a few were made of imported stone (p. 164). Mallets (*tukituki*) of small, unshaped pieces of coral conglomerate were used to pound caulking material between the seams of the plank canoe. Stones were used for grating talo and for cutting pearl shell (p. 169).

Religious Enclosures

778 346 Religious enclosures (*atuonga*) on which priests communicated with the gods were round or oval, the form demarcated by a circle of stones placed on edge. Two gaps (*pu*) were left in this circle as entrances to the worshiping place. In the center was the sacred stone (*una*) of the god. The ground inside the circle was covered with fine white coral gravel.

Today, only traces of several of these religious structures survive. No complete stone representation of a god remains, but informants suggested that this was any large block of unshaped *punga* coral (p. 319). A section of the stone that once represented the goddess Tuna, now functioning as a foundation stone for the old copra shed on Loto beach, bears out this information.

Several sites of old religious structures were visited at the place Utupoa on Wale where were formerly situated the enclosures of old Ngake village. 778 Two of these sites were cleared.

172 At the religious structure of the god Te Alongaea there remain nine stones of undressed coral, each stone approximately 32 inches wide, 16 inches high, and 4 inches thick. The tops of the stones are about 3 inches above ground level. By continuing the outline traced by the stones, it appears that the religious structure was about 12 paces in diameter. Of the stones standing, one is on the eastern rim, three on the northern rim, five on the southeastern rim. A young coconut tree is now growing on the western rim of the structure. A circle of coconut trees is planted round the outside of the rim of this structure as well as round that of the god Tulikalo. I do not know whether this was formerly the case. To test the levels of the structure, a trench 4 feet deep was sunk across it. The first level was sand and leaf mould. Twelve inches below the surface was the fine gravel that formerly marked the ground level. Below this again was the characteristic sandy gravel of the atoll. Nothing of further interest was turned up by the excavation.

The former religious structure of the god Tulikalo was also cleared to reveal five stones of about the same size as those on the structure of Te Alongaea. The enclosure was about 10 paces in diameter.

The two contiguous structures of the gods Tumulivaka and Te Matakiate are so overgrown that it was impossible to clear them. Examination of the ground showed that no stones are left on the structure of Tumulivaka. One stone was left on that of Te Matakiate. This stone of undressed *punga* coral is rectangular, 24 inches long, 8 inches above the ground, and 6 inches in diameter. Informants traced the outline of the structure. It apparently was oval with a diameter of about 13 paces one way, 13 paces the other.

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No other sites visited revealed stones. Informants stated that during early missionary days, the stones were removed to build a causeway across the tale swamp, to make walls for stone houses, and to burn for lime, which, mixed with sand, provided the mortar for the new stone houses.

The pattern of low-walled, oval or circular religious enclosures with a central stone representation of a god is an unusual development in Polynesia and recalls the structures that Gill described for Niutao in the Ellice Islands which he visited in 1872. Gill mentions that the stone representative of the god Tangaloa was a plain upright slab. The religious structure adjoined the burial ground (a common Pukapukan pattern) and consisted of "an oval low enclosure, composed of flat stones, some higher than others, each representing a distinct divinity, so that the sacred men standing inside the enclosure—the people of course outside—could worship all the gods at once" (12,p.14). It is unfortunate for comparative study that Gill did not particularise these religious enclosures in more detail.

Commemorative stones, marking the shrine of an ancestor god on a sacred clearing (*yiongo*), consisted of a single upright stone set in the ground, or else several stones set on edge to form a rectangular structure two or more feet square, the enclosure being filled in with coral gravel. This type of commemorative shrine was similar to the seats (*pota*) of the priests in the god house (*uale atua*) and also to the low seat that was set before the stone representative of the god on the religious structure.

Graves

Formerly each cemetery was surrounded by a low, rectangular wall (*paepae*) of coral stones which demarcated the area set aside by the people of a lineage as their burial place. The area varied in size according to the numerical size of the lineage. Most of these walls have fallen into decay, but are observable on some cemeteries removed from the village. The stones are about 3 inches above ground and are undressed coral of different lengths and thicknesses.

Outside these walls are observable the stone *paepae* that marked the foundations of old houses of mourning (*uale matenga*). On one foundation are still seen the holes into which the wall posts of the house fitted; on another, rotting wooden posts from the dismantled house are lying on the foundation.

Within each cemetery, the graves are of three types: the modern Christian, enclosed, boxlike grave; the rectangular, open grave accorded formerly to people of rank; and the two-stone grave accorded formerly to commoners (pl.2,*B*).

Former custom was to bury with head to the east, feet to the west. Graves of chiefs (*aliki uale* and *tuai alii*) were marked by eight stones—two at the head, two at

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described to me as a small raised platform of stones or coral pebbles, about 4 feet square, 2 feet high. Probably coral slabs were raised on edge and the container thus made was filled with small white coral pebbles. When a man returned from clam fishing he stopped before this shrine. Raising a clam in one hand, he addressed the god: "Leweke e, aumai te pipi kula, te pipi melo, te pipi waula ula; teia to tatau" (Leweke o, bring me—next time—red shellfish, brown shellfish, black shellfish; here is your share). He then threw his clam into the sea, toward a submerged rock a few feet from the beach. By this means he assured himself of abundant shellfish next time. A priest might also pray before this shrine.

The god house (*wale atua*), the sacred enclosure (*anunga ya*), and the cemetery constituted an integrated unit for each lineage and its gods in the functioning of Pukapukan religion. The sacred enclosure and the god house might be situated close together, contiguous with the cemetery of the senior lineage in the lineage grouping, or the three structures might be some distance apart. All three units, however, were on the section of land (*kawa*) owned by the lineage. Each sub-lineage (*wakavae*) of the major lineage had its own cemetery, usually also its own god house; if the sub-lineage was powerful enough to control major gods it also had its own sacred enclosure. In any case, the number of the lineage's sacred enclosures and god houses depended on the number of major gods recognized by the lineage. The number of god houses depended further on the number of ancestor gods recognized by the lineage, for each ancestor god was represented by a sacred clearing (*yionga ya*) and each clearing had its associated god house.

The size of the god house varied with the number of sub-lineage units in the descent group which, with the number of lineage gods, determined the number of priests that used the house. Each priest in the lineage had a seat next to a main ridgepost in the god house. Before and behind each post were sacred seats (*potu*), two to each post, for the priests to sit on. If there were twelve priests in the lineage, a house with six ridgeposts was required. The seats consisted of coral slabs placed on edge to form indifferently a round or square curbing about 9 inches high; the interior of this curbing was filled with fine gravel to form a low seat about 16 inches wide. The floor of the house was covered with fine white gravel.

Informants were not clear as to the degree to which the god house was tapu. Priests could go at any time to the house, which seems in many respects to have served as a club house for them when they were not engaged in consulting their gods. Women could not enter the house, nor could the general populace sit, idle, or work there. An individual might go to the god house to consult or to take food to a priest. The priests themselves might eat in the house without desecrating it. At special times, the men of the lineage could go to the god house, as for a shoulder-wrestling contest held at

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the end of the seclusion period for boys attaining adulthood. In general, it seems that the house was reserved for the exclusive use of the priests and that others went there only on errands.

Besides priestly costume, peace "nets" (*kupenga welo*)—one associated with each of the gods Te Laupapa, Te Alongaca, Tana, and a forgotten Yato god—were kept in the principal god house of the lineages. One was strung up at a meeting place by priests before the people congregated (p. 389).

The sacred enclosure (*awanga ya*) corresponds to the religious marae of other parts of Polynesia. Though no enclosure remains in existence today the sites of several are well known; on two of these a few stones are still in position. (See p. 160.) In the center of the enclosure was the sacred stone (*unu*), the material representation of the god, a solid piece of *punga* coral, of any size or shape. One side of the stone, arbitrarily called the face, was turned toward the east. The priest stepped into the enclosure from one of two entrances (*pu*), breaks in the coral curbing. One entrance was on the eastern (outer beach) side and was called *pu ki ngauta;* the other on the west or lagoon side was called *pu ki tai*. The priest advanced to the sacred stone, seated himself cross-legged before it and addressed the stone, and thus the god, in this position.

Under ordinary circumstances, no person other than the priest and his servant (*tauta*) was allowed on the enclosure. On set occasions, however, men went there, as to the god house, to clean up the ground, pick up rubbish, weed, refresh the gravel, or rebuild the curbings. No women assisted at this or any other time. No record survives of any ceremony designed to remove tapu from the enclosure so that the uninitiated might approach it. The routine cleanings were performed by the priest's servant who also acted as messenger for the priest.

Two worshiping structures are called *newu*, not *awanga*. These are *te newu o Tulikalo* and *te newu o Te Maungatu*. The meaning of the word *newu* in this sense is not clear. Some informants believed that *newu* is the name of the place where a god emerged from the Underworld when he visited the world of mortals. Others believed that because *newu* is the name of attendant spirits, enclosures called *newu* are those where attendant spirits of the major gods might be consulted.

The sacred clearings (*yionga*) of ancestor gods, were cleared avenues, bordered by coconut trees, which ran from the place where the man—later deified—was killed to the lagoon beach or, less frequently, to the outer beach. Clearings might be up to 100 yards long, and from 10 to 15 feet wide. They were kept weeded and cleared of rubbish. Clearings for ancestor gods were called *yionga tangata mate* to distinguish them from the *yionga ola* clearings erected for the sacred maid (*mayakitanga*) to walk on. Both types of clearings were made on land owned by the lineage sponsoring the god or the